

## Angie Lake

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**From:** Lisa Wenger <lwenger2@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2015 3:49 PM  
**To:** Rep. Kurt Heise; Angie Lake; kstaley@miccd.org  
**Subject:** Raise The Age Statement

Good afternoon,

I am in support of the Raise the Age proposed legislation and believe I can offer some perspective based on my prior experience as Director of the Washtenaw County Prisoner Release Project (PRP) and, more recently, upon my internship with the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office where I was assigned to the Juvenile Court.

I directed the PRP for four years between 2008 and 2012. In that role I met with 300-400 prisoners coming back to the community after their release. These individuals had child support obligations and I was employed as a referee with the Washtenaw County Friend of the Court at that time. In those four years not one individual related any prison experience that could remotely be considered as rehabilitative.

Contrast that with my observations in the Wayne County Juvenile Court in 2014-2015 where services provided to the juvenile population consisted of probation review hearings every six months where the youth's progress, or lack thereof as the case may be, was closely monitored and modified as needed. Not everyone successfully completed this process, but they were observed and given the opportunity to do so and, more importantly, modifications given as necessary for those who veered off course. The fact that everyone who provides services to that youth needed to account to the court every six months in and of itself was valuable, rehabilitative to the youth, and in stark contrast to services provided to someone the same age in the adult system.

I venture to add that most 17-18 year olds will eventually be released from prison, simply at a much younger age than I saw at the PRP hearings which raises the question of what futures we, as society, have consigned them to if they do not receive rehabilitative services in prison.

In many cases the only difference between those who go through juvenile court and those charged as adults is in how they are charged, not the initiating behavior, and both processes should be scrutinized and compared closely in this hearing process from this perspective.

I would be happy to provide further information if requested.

Thank you.

Lisa Wenger